

IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 3 and 4 without prejudice or disclaimer of their underlying subject matter.

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A pneumatic tire provided with a plurality of main grooves extended in a tire circumferential direction on a tread surface, wherein, with regard to a main groove having a groove width narrowed during inflation among said plurality of main grooves, both groove walls are inclined from the tread surface so as to define an acute angle between respective ones of the groove walls and the tread surface so that the groove width of the main groove becomes wider toward a groove bottom of the main groove, and a generally trapezoidally-shaped protrusion dividing a groove space of the main groove in a tire width direction is provided at the groove bottom, the protrusion having a pair of slanted side walls and a flat top surface disposed apart from the groove bottom and connecting the pair of slanted side walls with respective ones of the pair of slanted side walls and the both groove walls being oriented parallel to each other as viewed in cross-section,

wherein a height of said protrusion is made equal to or lower than said tread surface, a height difference between said protrusion and said tread surface is set in arrange from 0 to 2 mm, the height of said protrusion is at least 12 mm and a ratio of the height of said protrusion to a groove depth of the main groove is set at 0.8 or higher, and

wherein said protrusion is divided in the tire width direction by a slit formed into the flat top surface towards the groove bottom and extending circumferentially thereabout to form a first divided protrusion section and a second divided protrusion section in facial contact with the first divided protrusion section at the slit.

2-4. (CANCELED).

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 and 3~~, wherein a rubber composition constituting said protrusion and a rubber composition constituting said tread surface are made different from each other.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 and 3~~, wherein said main groove having the groove width narrowed during inflation is a straight groove.